

Democrats on Prescription Drugs: A Record to Be Proud Of

As Republicans finalize a prescription drug conference report without the participation of House Democratic conferees, it is important to remember that House Democrats have a voting record to be proud of on this issue. When it comes to fighting for seniors, disabled Americans, and health care providers, Democrats have repeatedly voted for alternatives that are far superior to the Republican proposals.

In June, 96% of Democrats (195 Members) voted to reject HR 1, which passed by 1 vote (216-215). This bill fails to provide seniors with an affordable benefit, leaves a significant gap in coverage, disadvantages rural communities, encourages employers to drop retiree drug benefits, contains the controversial Premium Support privatization measure, and fails to provide lower drug prices. **Instead, Democrats voted for 3 strong alternatives:**

- **Dooley Previous Question:** 203 Democrats voted against the Previous Question on the Rule for HR 1, in order to allow consideration of a plan that was modeled on HR 1568, introduced by Rep. Cal Dooley. As compared to HR 1, this bill would have targeted assistance to low-income seniors and seniors with high drug costs as part of Medicare Part B for no additional premium. It would also have provided all seniors with a Medicare-approved discount drug card.
- **Rangel-Dingell Substitute:** 174 Democrats voted for HR 1199, the Democratic substitute offered by Rep. Charles Rangel. As compared to HR 1, this substitute would have guaranteed seniors an affordable drug benefit under Medicare, protected the traditional Medicare program, increased funding for providers, and improved rural health care.
- **Thompson (CA) Motion to Recommit:** Democrats were 100% united in voting for a Motion to Recommit that was modeled on the bipartisan Senate bill. As compared to HR 1, this bill would have provided a significantly better drug benefit for our seniors, did not contain the controversial Premium Support provision, included a fallback provision, increased funding for providers, and improved rural health care.

Since July, Democrats have offered a series of motions to instruct conferees showing our commitment to key issues and building a record of supporting beneficiaries and providers.

➤ **Democrats have voted repeatedly to reject the privatization of Medicare:**

- On July 14, 2003, 189 Democrats voted for the Davis (TN)-Davis (FL) Motion to Instruct Conferees to reject privatization and provide a fall-back plan. (Roll Call # 359; failed 191-221)
- On September 10, 2003, 188 Democrats voted for the Michaud Motion to Instruct Conferees to reject privatization and provide a fall back plan. (Roll call #502; failed 189-220)
- On October 28, 2003, 188 Democrats voted for the Brown Motion to Instruct Conferees to strike Premium Support. (Roll Call #573; failed 194-209)
- On October 30, 2003, 193 Democrats voted for the Davis Motion to Instruct Conferees to strike Premium Support. (Roll Call #599; failed 195-217).

➤ **Democrats have voted repeatedly to improve rural health care:**

- On September 24, 2003, 194 Democrats voted for the Stenholm Motion to Instruct Conferees to accept the best provisions on rural health, primarily from the Senate bill. (Roll Call # 510; failed 202-213).
- On September 25, 2003, 192 Democrats voted for the Kind Motion to Instruct Conferees to accept the best provisions on rural health, primarily from the Senate bill. (Roll Call #522; 199-220).
- On September 30, 2003, 195 Democrats voted for the Sandlin Motion to Instruct Conferees to accept the best provisions on rural health, primarily from the Senate bill. (Roll Call #524; failed 202-205).
- On October 1, 2003, 201 Democrats voted for the Case Motion to Instruct Conferees to accept the best provisions on rural health, primarily from the Senate bill. (Roll Call #528; failed 208-215)

➤ **Democrats have voted repeatedly to improve the drug benefit and protect Medicare for our seniors:**

- On October 7, 2003, 180 Democrats voted for the Bishop Motion to Instruct Conferees to eliminate \$178 billion for Health Savings Accounts in order to provide more funds to close the coverage gap "donut hole". (Roll Call #533; failed 181-214).
 - On October 7, 2003, 182 Democrats voted against the Flake Motion to Instruct Conferees to expand means-testing to other provisions in the bill. (Roll Call #534; failed 161-234).
 - On October 15, 2003, 189 Democrats voted for the Schakowsky Motion to Instruct Conferees to eliminate \$178 billion for Health Savings Accounts in order to provide funds for employer coverage. (Roll Call #542; failed 190-218).
- **Democrats have voted to support Doctors:**
- On October 6, 2003, 189 Democrats voted for the Capps Motion to Instruct Conferees to strike Premium Support and transfer funds to doctors. (Roll Call #615; failed 197-209).
- **Democrats have voted to support Hospitals:**
- On November 7, 2003, 177 Democrats voted for the Cardoza Motion to Instruct Conferees to strike Premium Support in order to provide increased funds for Medicaid Disproportionate Share hospital payments. (Roll Call #619; failed 197-209).
 - In addition, in each of the motions above to improve rural health care, Democrats voted to support rural hospitals. (Roll Call #s 510, 522, 524, 528, 619).

While we have not seen specific language on a conference agreement, **Democrats will continue to fight for an affordable, guaranteed prescription drug benefit under Medicare. Democratic members should be confident of their strong voting record** and Members are urged to withhold judgment until all of the details are available.